

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



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SEP 24 1982

**1. Name**

OHP

historic The A. Berding House

and/or common The Gum Drop Tree House

**2. Location**

street & number 455 Ocean Ave. N/A not for publication

city, town Ferndale N/A vicinity of congressional district Second

state California code 06 county Humboldt code 023

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Maylane Chamberlin

street & number 455 Ocean Ave.

city, town Ferndale N/A vicinity of state California 95536

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Humboldt County Courthouse

street & number 825 Fifth Street

city, town Eureka state California 95501

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Ferndale Historical Committee has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1973  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Ferndale Historical Committee

city, town Ferndale state California 95536

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date <u>N/A</u>

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Victorian Gothic A. Berding House blends the Gothic features of gables and bargeboard with the Victorian detailing of an Italianate bay and windows. The open porch with decorative arches and balustrade, the corner quoins, and the arched and triangular window pediments highlight the cottage's basic Gothic Revival form. Surrounded by old-yard plantings, flowerbeds, and a handsome Eastlake fence and gate, the A. Berding House remains much as it was at the time of its construction in 1875. Carefully preserved by continuous family ownership with only minor changes, none of which intrude upon the integrity of its Victorian Gothic architecture, the A. Berding House is a delightful reminder of the region's pioneer era.

Of irregular outline and containing over 3,000 square feet of space, the house is one-and-a-half stories with multiple gables which rise steeply above the roofline and have extended eaves decorated with open-work bargeboard. Built of wood with shiplap siding and corner quoins, the house was raised two years after construction to sit high above the ground on a brick foundation which has been covered with cement.

The front facade consists of a front-facing gable and a perpendicular wing which terminates in a gable. In the front-facing gable is a single, four-pane, arched window in the upper story. Above it is a triangular pediment with brackets. In the lower story is a four-window square bay with a bracketed flat roof. Originally there were railings on the bay and the porch roofs, but these had to be removed because of roof leaks. The bay windows are arched and have two panes. Between the windows are pilasters and below each are inset panels. Across the wing is an open porch with an off-centered front door with panels, divided sidelights, and a transom. Casements, covered by an arched pediment, open onto the porch. The casement window above the porch has the same arched pediment. The flat-roof porch is decorated by three arches across the front and one at the side. Handsome tapered posts with brackets and tiny capitals provide the bases for the arches. Step and porch railings are of turned balusters.

The upper story window in the gable end of the wing is arched with four panes and a bracketed, triangular pediment. Another section extends from the wing to terminate in a gable at the rear of the house. In this section is a center gable with two, four-pane windows covered by arched pediments. Below these is a porch which was partially glassed in before 1900. The porch door, which repeats the casements and arched pediments of the front porch door, still opens to the outside, however, and the posts and railings are intact.

(continued)

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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Gables at the rear of the house repeat the bargeboard decoration and the arched four-pane windows topped by arched pediments. One gable contains a small porch and door with an added enclosure which extends from the house onto the porch. Originally, there was an outside stairway leading to this little porch, but it was removed when the porch was enclosed in the mid-1930's. The flat-roofed, glass-enclosed utility porch has two sets of steps with railings and newel posts: one leads to the yard and sidewalk and the other is now enclosed within the woodshed which was added before 1900. Beyond the woodshed is an attached garage, built in the mid-1940's. The history of the utility porch is unknown, but apparently it was part of the original house and was enclosed at an early date, perhaps at the time the woodshed was constructed. While the woodshed and garage are not part of the original house, they do not detract from the building's charm and architecture. The Eastlake carriage house, built in 1901 and remodeled into apartments in the 1950's, faces a side street and was split from the property in 1981.

On the northwest side of the house, there are two, bargeboard-decorated roof gables, each of which contains an arched, four-pane window topped by an arched pediment. In the lower story are four arched windows with arched pediments.

Painted white with a gray foundation and porch steps and a vivid pink front door, the house sits almost hidden from view by the five coast cypress trees, planted before the house was built and pruned through the years to look like big gum-drops. Old-yard plantings, statuary, sidewalks bordered by flowerbeds, the beautiful wall-and-picket fence complete with newel posts and a double gate, and the identifying "gum-drops" all contribute to the qualities of this picturesque cottage. Neighborhood setting includes the Ferndale Cemetery and the old Methodist Church across the street; down the street is the Old Catholic Rectory, recently accepted to the National Register. The main thoroughfare of Victorian Ferndale with its many preserved 19th and early 20th century buildings is less than a block away.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1875 Builder/Architect Unknown

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The A. Berding House is nominated to the National Register as an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic architecture. Built during Humboldt County's settlement period, the house retains an unusually high degree historical and architectural integrity. As one of Ferndale's finest examples of 19th century design, the A. Berding House was identified as a contributing building in the community's designation as a State Historical Landmark in 1975. Also recognized in David Gebhard's Guide to Architecture in San Francisco and Northern California (1973) for its fine Victorian Gothic architecture and "wonderful grounds," the A. Berding House remains a highly significant part of Ferndale's heritage--a heritage of fine 19th and early 20th century houses and commercial buildings which provide a unique historic character to this rural California community.

Of German birth, A. Berding came to California by way of South America to participate in the great 1849 adventure. As with most argonauts, however, Berding found his fame and fortune not in gold, but in the business world. After several years of travels and a variety of ventures, he eventually settled in Humboldt County, establishing a general store first at Centerville (on the coast near Ferndale) before moving to the Town of Ferndale where he started the community's first store in the late 1860's. He married a widow, Mary Blum, in 1867 and in addition to her three children, Henry, Robert, and Lena, there were four Berding children, Gertrude, August, Christina, and Joseph. A. Berding purchased the present house lot in 1868. An original house was moved a block away when the present house was built in 1875. Ownership has remained in the family, having passed from Berding through his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The present owner, Maylane Chamberlin, is a great granddaughter.

Notable for its gabled roofline, lacy bargeboard, Victorian bay and pedimented windows, corner quoins, and artistic porch with arches, decorated posts and railing, the A. Berding House has been preserved and enjoyed by a sensitive and caring family through the years. Interior decor and furnishings remain with little change since the parlor was papered and decorated for a daughter's wedding in 1889. The colors have mellowed with time, but it is still beautiful, providing the setting for the old square piano which was

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Deed Records, Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka, CA.  
 Assessment Records, Humboldt State University Library, Arcata, CA.  
 Personal Communication, Maylane Chamberlin, Ferndale, CA., Nov., 1981.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approximately .39 acres

Quadrangle name Ferndale

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	0	3	9	3	1	2	0	4	4	9	2	2	2	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

C 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

D 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

E 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

F 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

G 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

H 

Zone				Easting				Northing					

**Verbal boundary description and justification** Beginning at a point 75° NWly from the intersection of the NELY line of Ocean with the NWly line of Berding, thence 121.90° NWly; thence 51.35° NEly; thence 35.19° NWly; thence 45.60° NEly; thence 24.55° SEly; thence 12.05° NEly; thence 24.91° SEly; thence 9° NEly; thence 107.58°

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries **SEly; thence 118.43° SWly to beginning.**

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
-------	-----	------	--------	-----	------

state	N/A	code	county	N/A	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Susie Van Kirk

organization N/A

date September 21, 1982

street & number 1162 C Street

telephone (707) 822-6066

city or town Arcata

state California 95521

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

*K. Mellon*

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 24, 1982

**For HCRS use only**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*J. Delores Byers*  
 Keeper of the National Register

Entered in the  
 National Register

date 1/4/83

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

FHR-8-300A  
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE

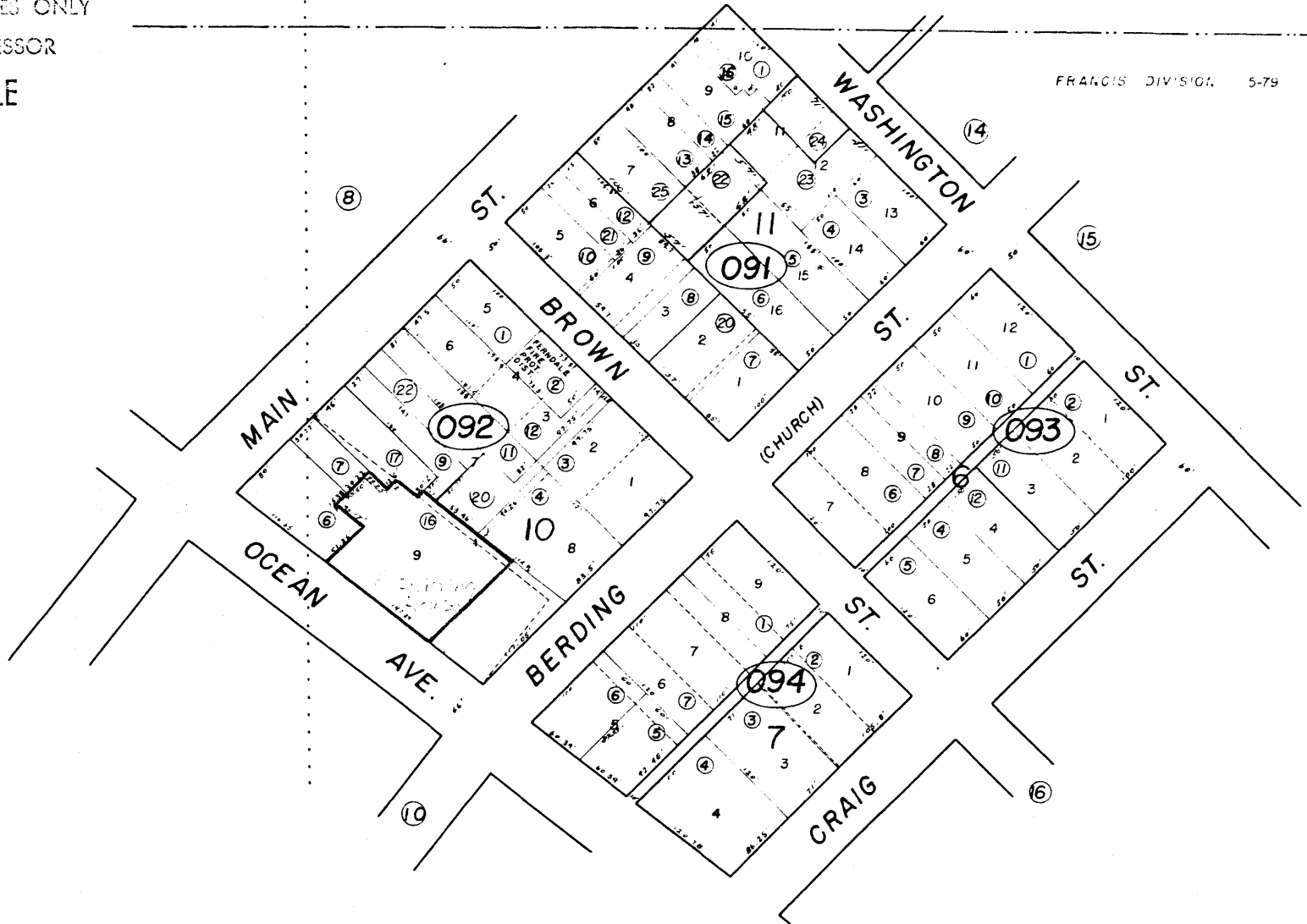
1

brought to California around the Horn in the 1870's. The original wood shutters cover the insides of the windows and the parlor furniture continues to sit as it has for decades. The yard and statuary, the "gum-drop" trees, and the beautiful fence and gate provide a supportive setting for this fine old house. For its handsome Victorian Gothic architecture and its contribution to the historic character of the community, the A. Berding House deserves the recognition and protection of National Register designation.

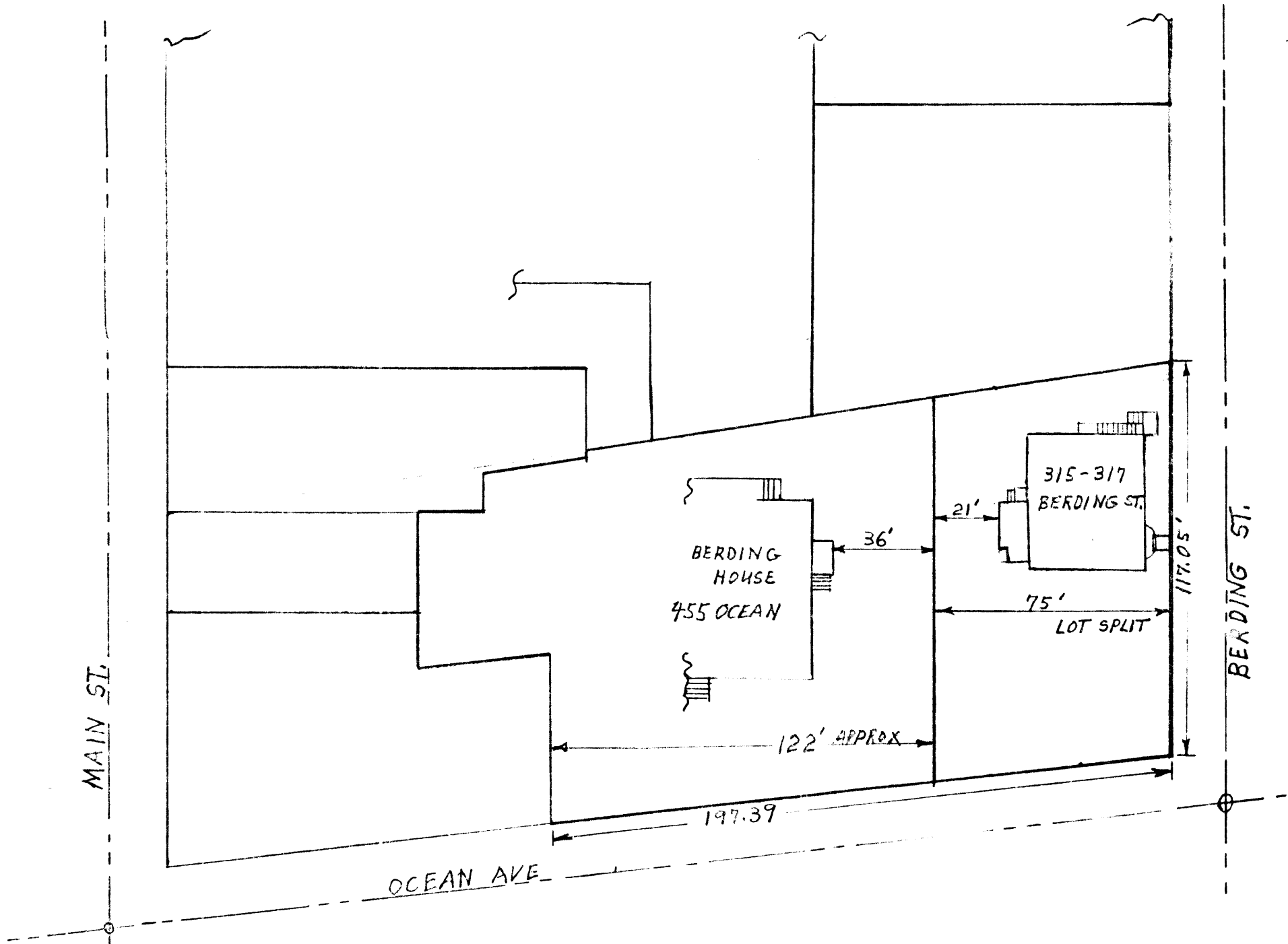
THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL MAP  
FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY  
HUMBOLDT COUNTY ASSESSOR  
NOT TO SCALE

CITY OF FERNDALE

FRANCIS DIVISION 5-79



52



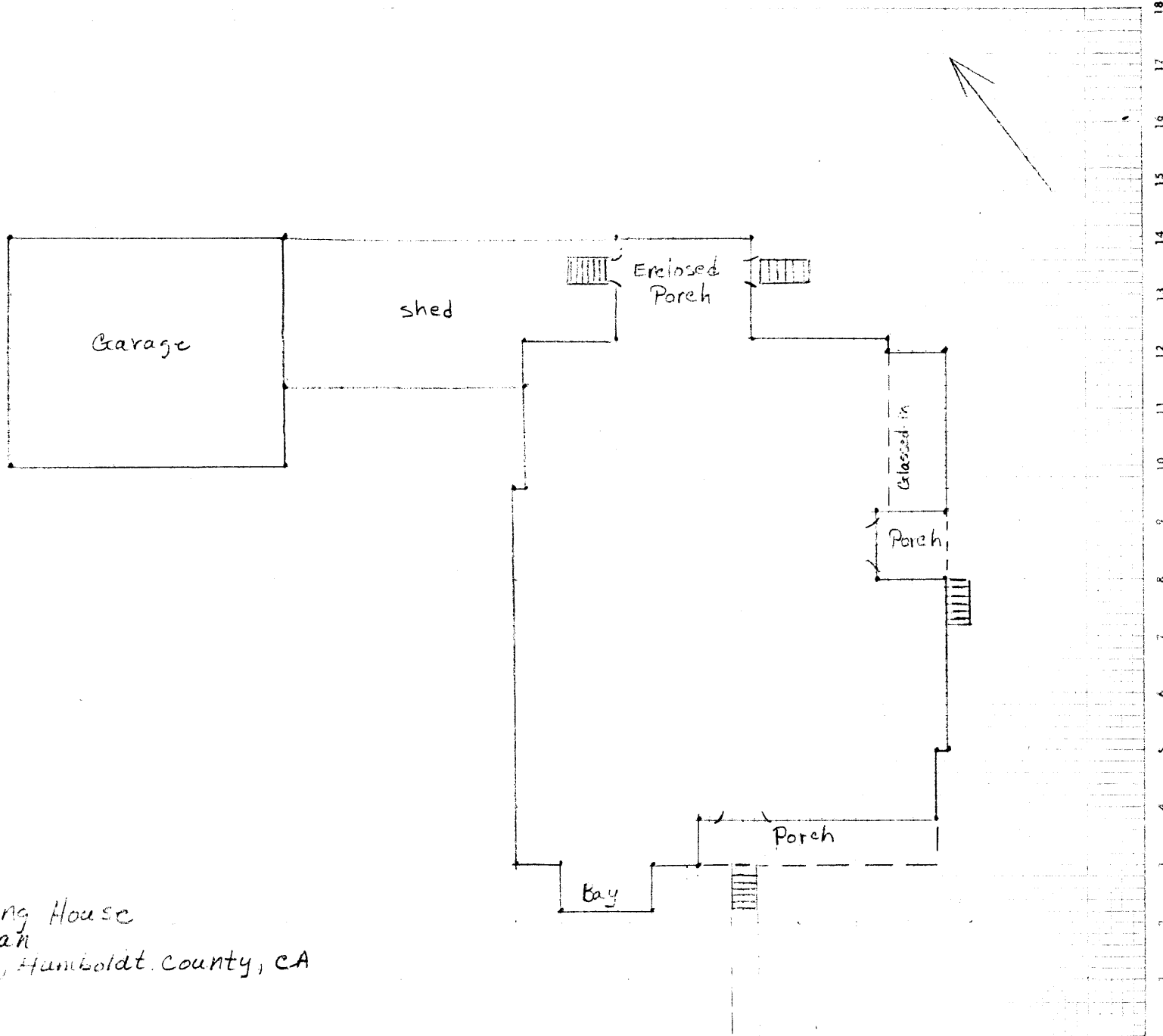
MAIN ST.

OCEAN AVE.

BERDING ST.

SCALE:  $\frac{1}{10}'' = 4.1$  FEET APPROX.





A. Berding House  
455 Ocean  
Ferndale, Humboldt County, CA